

BOOK REVIEWS

Healing by Royal Suggestion

The Royal Touch. Sacred Monarchy and Scrofula in England and France. Marc Bloch. (Pp. 441; £6.50.) Routledge & Kegan Paul. 1973.

Every schoolboy knows that Dr. Johnson was touched by Queen Anne for scrofula but how many students today know what scrofula is? In my own time as a medical student tuberculous cervical adenitis, now so rarely seen, formed a high proportion of surgical practice. In *The Royal Touch* Marc Bloch, the eminent French historian who perished in the Resistance, used the alleged royal power of healing to illustrate the struggle between Pope and Emperor for spiritual authority. The Gregorian doctrine that emperors and kings had no spiritual or healing powers, in which they were inferior to the lowest ordained priest, was resisted by the Holy Roman Emperor, but the healing power claim gradually faded out of the

central European power struggle and became confined to the Capetian dynasty in France and the Plantagenet successors of the Norman invaders in England. Scrofula yielded to the authentic royal touch, cramps (epilepsy) to blessed rings.

To us it is interesting to trace the waxing and waning of therapeutic claims in Tudor and Stuart times. Henry VIII's modest pretensions were followed by Bloody Mary's extension and elaboration of ceremonial. Elizabeth gave up the issue of cramp rings and touched on a modest scale only, and her successor from Scotland, under the reproving scrutiny of his Calvinistic divines, touched rarely and cannily. His son and grandsons became enthusiastic touchers and used their alleged powers to prove the validity of their dynastic claims. Even in exile in Europe Charles II and James II held touching sessions and the earliest recorded package tours to the continent from England and

Scotland promised the "royal touch" as the pièce de résistance. William of Orange would have nothing to do with it but, under pressure of the Tories, Queen Anne tried to cure at a stroke, the last touch being on 27 April, 1714. The healing power was claimed for the sovereign in person; in Stuart times a claimant to healing gifts was a certain victim for the Star Chamber.

We may agree with Dr. Carr, who stated in the reign of William of Orange that the royal touch was not in any way harmful and that it was greatly superior to many of the dangerous remedies in medical use.

This is a delightful book to read and to handle. The notes and bibliography are extensive and detailed. The healing powers of suggestion must never be denied; the kings and queens were unconscious Charcots but were helpful none the less.

GEORGE R. MCROBERT

Oncogenic Adenoviruses

Progress in Experimental Tumour Research. Vol. 18 Oncogenic Adenoviruses. Ed. L. P. Merkow and M. Slifkin. (Pp. 312; £10.80.) Karger. 1973.

The days when our knowledge of adenoviruses could be adequately covered in a single chapter is past. The whole of volume 18 of *Progress in Experimental Tumour Research* is devoted to the oncogenic adenoviruses. The first chapter by L. Philipson and U. Pettersson gives a general account of the structure and biological activities of the adenoviruses. They form a well defined group of 32 human, 23 simian, 6 bovine, 4 porcine, 2 canine, 1 murine, and 8 avian serotypes so far identified. There is no evidence that adenoviruses can cause tumours in their natural hosts but some of the human, simian, bovine, canine, and avian strains can produce malignant tumours on injection into newborn hamsters, rats, and mice. The human adenoviruses vary in their oncogenicity and some of the types which will not produce tumours in animals will transform

cells in vitro. Work on the bovine adenoviruses, the simian adenoviruses, and the chicken embryo lethal orphan virus are reviewed in separate chapters by J. H. Darbyshire, L. P. Merkow, and M. Slifkin. A higher proportion of female hamsters injected soon after birth with adenoviruses develop tumours than males and the experimental work on this observation is assessed by D. S. Yohn. Much of the progress in tumour virus research in the last few years has resulted from a study of cell transformation in vitro and the biological parameters of adenovirus transformation are reviewed by B. C. Casto. In cells transformed by adenoviruses the infection is abortive, no infective virus being produced.

The action of the viral nucleic acid in the process of transformation and production of tumour antigens is discussed in a chapter by W. A. Strohl. Adenoviruses produce many chromosomal changes in infected cells and these changes are described by H. zur Hausen. The use of mutant strains to study the processes involved in the productive and

abortive infectious process are reviewed by H. F. Stich. One of the most interesting phenomena observed in the study of adenoviruses has been the interaction with simian papovavirus 40. In doubly infected cells part of the SV₄₀ genome can be encapsulated with the adenovirus, giving it the ability to produce tumours with the SV₄₀ tumour antigen. This work is well reviewed in a chapter by F. Rapp. Many adenovirus stocks are contaminated with a defective adenovirus—associated (satellite) virus—which can only replicate in adenovirus-infected cells. The satellite virus can be isolated from humans but its role, if any, in human disease is not known. This subject is reviewed by C. J. Henry.

This book provides a very useful and up to date account of work on the oncogenic adenoviruses, and should be read by anyone requiring more than the superficial account given in reviews of the whole field of oncogenic viruses.

K. E. K. ROWSON

Developing Countries and Food Problems

Nutrition. A Priority in African Development. Ed. B. Vahlquist. (Pp. 228; Sw. kr. 40.) Almqvist & Wiksell, Stockholm. 1972.

This is the edited revision of papers given at a recent seminar, which opened in Uppsala and concluded in Addis Ababa, where there is a well known Swedish-financed nutrition

institute. Most of the participants were senior officials in appropriate ministries from nine African countries (Botswana, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria, Tanzania, and Zambia). The problems of planning and implementing programmes to improve nutrition in these countries and others like them are considered from the viewpoints

of the different professionals who have to work together if success is to be achieved. There are contributions from medical nutritionists and paediatricians, a social anthropologist, an agriculturalist, a food scientist, several economists, a communications expert, a director of medical services, and a finance ministry's planning adviser,

who has no special knowledge of nutrition but has to balance the numerous competing claims for an inadequate budget.

Nutritional deficiencies and interrelated problems are different between countries and in different sections of a single country's population. The contributors look for common patterns and general principles. This makes the book readable and widely applicable. There are enough examples of past failures or partial successes from round the world to keep our feet on the ground.

Vahlquist, D. and P. Jelliffe, and Hofvander give simple accounts of the major nutritional problems, concentrating on the interrelationships with infections, productivity, and birth control. The biggest problem is protein-calorie malnutrition in the

under-fives. Which type depends on the socio-economic problems and the dietary staple. There is strong suspicion too that childbearing women are inadequately nourished. All these conditions probably lead to reduced productivity in adult life. They certainly cause misery and if people don't believe their child will survive they are not interested in family planning. The proper place for family planning is alongside nutritional and medical health-promoting measures in the maternity and child health clinics.

A steady increase in a country's gross national product is not a guarantee that nutritional problems are simultaneously and proportionately reduced. Vulnerable groups do not automatically share the benefits the economist reports, and malnutrition is to a

great extent a by-product of what is called economic development. Strategies of co-ordinated planning programmes to improve the nutrition of affected sections of the community are sketched out with allowances here and there for the importance of politics. The contributions by food technology, agriculture, outside aid, and local nutrition training at all levels are considered.

I find this a valuable and well-balanced book, not only for nutritionists and public health workers but I should think for all the other involved professions. The text is sensible and readable with some wise or quotable passages. Though past failures are acknowledged and analysed the general note is optimistic.

STEWART TRUSWELL

A Clinical Specialty

Neurological Examination in Clinical Practice. 3rd edn. Edwin R. Bickerstaff, F.R.C.P. (Pp. 361; £6.) Blackwell. 1973.

Some published guides to the clinical examination of the human nervous system are too brief to be of any value, and others, painfully detailing every conceivable variant of every physical sign, too encyclopaedic to be used on the ward—or even read. Dr. Bickerstaff's book was first published ten years ago and was immediately successful, even enjoying the enviable distinction of translation into Japanese. It is exactly the right length for the postgraduate student of medicine or neurology, or for the registrar. The author is well known for his vivid and lively style, and the many illustrations are clear and well chosen.

One must agree with Dr. Bickerstaff that new methods of investigating organic

diseases of the nervous system, such as radioisotope brain scanning, sophisticated neuroradiology, and cerebral biopsy can furnish invaluable information in the difficult clinical problem. In fact, however, neurology remains the most clinical of all specialties and although special investigational techniques may amplify, clarify, and differentiate among various clinically suspected syndromes, the first aim is to recognize the existence of an organic lesion, to localize it within the nervous system, to enumerate the pathological possibilities, and finally to define the clinicopathological entity, often, though not always, by using special techniques.

The therapeutic nihilism that was once characteristic of neurology is a thing of the past. Sometimes, however, and especially in some American centres, undue reliance is placed on elaborate multiple screening tests

rather than on the first basis of a careful clinical history. One famous American physician said that so long as he took the history himself he was content to leave the physical examination in the hands of any first-class resident. Neither Dr. Bickerstaff nor the reviewer could entirely agree with this view, but it contains an element of truth. The splendidly detailed and accurate account of clinical methods furnished in this book will take the young physician far in recognizing the existence of and localizing a neurological lesion, but the very first step in his investigation must be painstakingly to unravel the case history. It is the ability to do this that distinguishes the great from the merely pedestrian physician, and without it we might as well all be veterinarians.

HENRY MILLER

Poisoned—or Potty?

Psychiatric Complications of Medical Drugs. Ed. Richard I. Shader, M.D. (Pp. 394; Dfl. 60.) North-Holland. 1972.

The last few years have seen the production of a number of rather unimaginative texts on drug adverse effects. This book, if it fulfilled the expectations of its title, would be the first to provide a good guide to this rather neglected corner of the field. An impressive list of contributors came together under the editorship of Dr. Shader to produce an issue of *Seminars in Psychiatry* dealing with the psychiatric side effects of medical drugs. The present book is an expanded and updated version of that issue.

The essays on the psychiatric effects of cortisol, L-dopa, and antituberculosis treatment stand out as the most valuable chapters. The very last section—emotional side effects of placebo—is a splendid reminder that drugs are often criticized unfairly for symptoms evolved within the fertile minds of sophisticated latter-day patients who expect adverse effects. But the book contains a lot of material that is out of date, unnecessarily complicated, and repetitive.

The chapter on amphetamines could only be justified in a comprehensive text. This

text is far from comprehensive—no mention is made of the personality changes in hypoglycaemia or hypokalaemia or of the psychiatric effects of salicylates, indomethacin, and other analgesics. Reserpine hardly merits 30 pages—the risk of depression is minimal if doses are kept below 0.5 mg daily in patients with no history of depression. An even longer account of atropine and its derivatives is full of irrelevancy—the botany and various clinical uses to which atropine derivatives are put. A five-page list of commercial combination preparations containing belladonna alkaloids seems a waste of space as atropine poisoning is usually seen with overdosage of tricyclic antidepressants or antihistamines. A sound account of anticonvulsants and folate deficiency is buried in a chapter on vitamins as therapeutic agents. Ten pages of this are devoted to a detailed criticism of the pre-chlorpromazine work which claimed that nicotinic acid was useful in schizophrenia. There is overlap and repetition in the coverage of the sex hormones. Oestrogens appear and reappear in sections on hormones and behaviour, androgens and oestrogens, and progesterone and oral contraceptives.

Some unintentional light relief is to be

found in these interesting chapters on the sex hormones. Readers intending to use androgens for some clinical purpose will be perplexed to know in what light to interpret an experiment which showed that castrated puppies only acquire their characteristic style of micturition when androgens are given. However, intending users of progesterone will be reassured to learn that the drug cannot be held responsible for the phenomenon by which, at the menarche, certain quiet and demure girls become "rebellious sexually provocative hell raisers." Psycho-sexual endocrinology, if such a term may be coined, is obviously an interesting subject.

There is much to admire and enjoy in this book but its irrelevancies, repetitions, and incompleteness deserve the strongest criticism. These can only result from poor planning and unduly tolerant editing. The index is reasonable and those who like references for every positive statement will not be disappointed. There would be something in this book for any student or doctor, but the most benefit will be obtained by psychiatrists, endocrinologists, and gynaecologists, to whom it is highly recommended.

R. A. WOOD